



LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF NAPA COUNTY

Policy on Telecommuting

(Adopted: July 8, 1997)

Introduction and Purpose

Telecommuting or allowing some employees to work at home during a part of their scheduled hours, can both accommodate the needs of the employees and benefit the County. The County considers telecommuting to be a viable work option that, when appropriately applied, benefits both the organization and the individual employee.

Telecommuting is defined as allowing designated employees, on a periodic basis and during their scheduled work hours, to fulfill their job responsibilities at a site other than their primary work location.

Telecommuting Guidelines and Principles

- Telecommuting is a cooperative arrangement between the supervisor and employee, not an entitlement, and is based upon:
 - the needs of the job, work group and County
 - the employee's past and present levels of performance
- Jobs suitable for telecommuting are characterized by clearly defined tasks and work products. A telecommuter's performance is measured by output, not work location.
- Telecommuting is a tool allowing for flexibility in work options.
- Telecommuting does not change the basic terms and conditions of employment with the County.
- Each telecommuting arrangement is jointly agreed between the employee and supervisor, and approved by the Department Head. Telecommuting is voluntary and may be terminated, at will, at any time either by the County or the employee.
- County-provided equipment at home is not an entitlement on telecommuting. Depending on the job, equipment needs for telecommuters will vary from as little as phone, paper and pencil to as much as a computer, modem, printer, data line and fax machine. Some equipment may be provided at the County's option and availability.
- Work products generated while telecommuting shall be transferable and/or compatible with County equipment and software.

Ground Rules

- Telecommuting occurs on a part-time basis. Salary, job responsibilities, benefits and County-sponsored insurance coverages do not change as a result of telecommuting.
- Telecommuters shall have regularly scheduled work hours agreed upon with their supervisor and Department Head and remain obligated to comply with all County rules, policies and procedures.
- Telecommuters will be as accessible as their on-site counterparts during their agreed upon regular business hours, regardless of work location.
- Telecommuters who work at home will have a designated work space agreed to by the County and maintained by the employee, and subject to supervisor and/or Department Head visit to the designated work area to ensure that safe work conditions exist. The County shall not be responsible for any costs related to remodeling and initial set-up (e.g. furniture, fixtures) of the designated work space.
- Telecommuters working at home will take all precautions necessary to secure privileged information in the home and prevent unauthorized access to any County system from the home.
- Telecommuters may be expected to provide telecommuting equipment such as a computer, appropriate software applications, modem, printer and telephone access line at their own expense. The County, at its discretion, may assist employees in such purchases.
- Telecommuter's tax implications related to the home work space are the responsibility of the employee.
- Telecommuting expenses not covered in this policy will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis between the employee and the Department Head.
- Telecommuters who work at home will manage dependent care and personal responsibilities in a manner that allows them to successfully fulfill job responsibilities.
- Telecommuters, their supervisor and the Department Head will jointly sign a Telecommuting Agreement that can be terminated at any time by either the County or the employee.

Selection Criteria

Criteria to be considered when assessing the feasibility of telecommuting are:

Job Characteristics

- Clear and definable tasks and work products exist or can be identified, and work activities are measurable, including objectives with identifiable time frames and check points.
- Minimal face-to-face communication requirements (communication can be handled over the telephone, voice mail, or electronic mail)
- Position already works independently in the handling of information, such as writing, reading, telephoning, planning, computer programming, and word processing.
- Minimal requirements for special equipment exist.

Employee Characteristics

- Demonstrated ability to perform and high job knowledge.
- Not in a probationary status.
- Self-motivated, self-disciplined, and self-directed.
- Skilled in planning, organizing, managing time, and meeting clear standards and objectives, and in achieving results and working independently.

Supervisory Characteristics

- Ability to establish clear objectives and job measurements.
- Provides regular feedback on employee's performance.
- Facilitates open communication and ongoing interaction with telecommuter.

Equipment Considerations

The need for telecommuting equipment shall be determined on a case by case basis by the employee and supervisor. Generally, employees will be required to provide telecommuting equipment with County compatible software programs unless justified by the needs of the County and the nature of the work assignment. The Department Head shall have final determination of the employee need of County equipment for telecommuting purposes. Once approved, the installation, repair and maintenance of telecommuting equipment becomes the responsibility of the County; the supervisor shall track the use of equipment to ensure it is used for business purposes and in meeting the goals of the department.

The County, at its sole discretion, may choose to provide equipment and related supplies for use by the employee while telecommuting or may permit the use of employee-owned equipment subject to County rules and limitations. The decision as to the type, function, and/or quality of electronic hardware, modems, systems access, data and phone lines shall rest entirely with the County. The employee agrees that the use of equipment, software, data and supplies provided by the County for use by the employee is limited to authorized persons and for purposes related to County business only.

Should the County determine that the employee's job no longer necessitates or requires in-home equipment services, or the employee terminates employment, the employee shall return all County-owned equipment, software, data and supplies. The decision to remove or discontinue use of such equipment rests solely with the County.

The employee agrees to designate an appropriate work space within his/her remote work location for placement and installation of any County-provided equipment. When employee-owned equipment is used, it may be inspected prior to initiation of the telecommuting agreement. Repairs to employee-owned equipment will remain the responsibility of the employee. The County does not assume any liability for loss, damage or wear of employee owned equipment.

The County may at any time change any and all of the conditions under which employees are permitted to telecommute, and the County will not be liable for employees' costs, including but not limited to any investment in furniture or equipment for the designated work space. Any telecommuting expenses not specifically covered in this policy will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis between the employee and the Department Head.

Measuring Job Performance

A successful performance evaluation process requires that supervisors and employees jointly set clear and measurable performance objectives, including:

- Identifying the specific tasks and behavior objectives to be accomplished during a performance cycle.
- Establishing how to measure the objectives.
- Prioritizing work by identifying those results most crucial and those that can be deferred.
- Analyzing how objectives support work goals.

Management Guidelines

Supervisors and managers shall define tasks as much as possible in terms of output. Having measurable results and, if possible, milestones built into the job makes remote supervising much easier. Supervisors of telecommuters must focus on the employee's expected work product.

Frequent communication between the supervisor and the telecommuter is important to ensure that tasks and performance expectations are clearly defined. Electronic and voice mail access for the telecommuter facilitates daily contact with the supervisor and other County personnel. Telecommuters should be easy to reach within a reasonable amount of time.

Timekeeping/Reporting and Liability

All County policies and Memoranda of Understanding regarding attendance and hours worked shall apply to telecommuting employees. The telecommuter and his/her supervisor shall agree upon a schedule of regular work hours, to be approved by the Department Head. Unless a different work schedule is designated, telecommuter's work hours are assumed to be 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, with scheduled break periods and lunch period that are considered off-duty time. Any changes of work hours or work location shall be reviewed and approved by the supervisor and Department Head.

Telecommuters are generally expected to spend the entire telecommuting day at the same remote work location. Only travel specifically authorized by the telecommuter's supervisor and Department Head will be considered business travel. Establishing a remote work location does not make the telecommuter's regular commute to his/her primary work location a business trip or subject to compensation.

The telecommuter remains liable for injuries to third parties and/or members of the employee's family on the telecommuter's premises.

OVERTIME

It is expected that employees who telecommute may be required to work beyond the customary work week to ensure successful completion of job responsibilities. Existing policies, laws, and

Memoranda of Understanding are applicable to these situations, and as for all employees, overtime work shall be pre-authorized by the supervisor.

INFORMATION SECURITY

The Napa County Computer Information Use and Security Policy that applies to on-site employees shall apply to telecommuters. The telecommuting employee is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Computer Use Policy and security of information at their home work site.

SAFETY AND ON-SITE INSPECTIONS

The employee has the responsibility to maintain his/her home work space in a safe condition, free from hazards or other dangers. The employee shall allow the County to visit the employee's home work space for the purpose of determining that it is safe and free from hazards. The County does not assume any liability for loss, damage, or wear of employee-owned equipment, furniture, etc.

SECURITY

The information provided by the County for telecommuter use, generated in the course of telecommuting, and/or used by the telecommuter for approved County purposes is owned and an asset of the County and must be protected from unauthorized, incorrect or accidental access, use, modification, destruction or disclosure.

The County has an unrestricted right of access to and disclosure of all data and software on any County equipment or media, at the request of the appropriate County official(s). Information generated or placed into personally-owned personal computers being used on County time, as well as work undertaken on behalf of the County during or outside of any County worksite and/or work hours shall be made available for review at the request of appropriate County officials. Such access and disclosure shall be in accordance with, and subject to any controls or restrictions imposed by applicable statutes or licenses.

Employees shall be accountable for securing information by taking reasonable and prudent measures to safeguard information on a routine basis. Information will be protected by the employee in a manner consistent with its value, in all forms (e.g. written, oral, video, computer) throughout its life cycle.